

## **Road Trips Top Travelers' Summer Vacation Plans**

**The June edition of the Shopper Insights Report shows that the still-struggling economy has impacted summer vacation plans, propelling more travelers to choose destinations they can reach by driving this summer.**

ATLANTA, June 14, 2012 [/PRNewswire/](#) -- According to a survey conducted by AutoTrader.com in May, 79 percent of respondents who are planning to travel this summer indicated that the still-struggling economy has propelled them to modify their vacation plans. Thirty-seven percent of travelers will spend less on vacationing this year compared to last, and 28 percent plan to vacation somewhere closer to home.

The survey revealed that nearly 80 percent of travelers plan to drive to their vacation destinations this summer, but the most telling statistic was that 28 percent indicated that they are more likely to pick a destination they can reach by driving this summer compared to last year.

"The fact that more travelers are choosing destinations they can reach by car because of economic concerns is a signal of caution, but the positive sign in the data is that people are still planning to go on vacation at all. The car is an enabler of this year's summer vacations, even more so than in years past. Despite higher than normal gas prices, the car is still seen as the lower cost alternative compared to other choices," said Rick Wainschel, vice president of automotive insights at AutoTrader.com.

### **Most Important Features in a Travel Vehicle**

With the car being the preferred mode of vacation transportation, AutoTrader.com surveyed travelers on what features and options are most important to them in the vehicle they plan to drive. Coming out on top was comfort/leg room, with 72 percent of respondents selecting this option. Good fuel economy ranked No. 2 on the list, at 62 percent, and storage space rounded out the top three at 55 percent.

### **Eight Great Summer Vacation Vehicles**

For those travelers who are looking to purchase a vehicle that will be a comfortable companion on long road trips, as well ones that offer the fuel economy, versatility, and useful technological features that travelers desire, the experts at AutoTrader.com recommend these eight great vehicles:

- **2013 Ford Taurus:** The Taurus is a big, comfortable American sedan that's equally at home on a daily commute or a family road trip. It has tons of safety features like electronic stability control, rollover sensors and a post-crash alert system, as well as quite a few optional safety systems. The car has compelling tech features too, including the significantly updated MyFord Touch system. A front-wheel drive Taurus earns an EPA rating of 19 mpg city, 29 highway and 23 mpg combined.
- **2012 Honda Odyssey:** The 2012 Odyssey is cavernous on the inside, with 172.6 cubic feet of total passenger volume and 148.5 cubic feet of cargo volume behind the front seats. With comfortable and flexible seating configurations, numerous storage bins and up to 15 beverage holders, the Odyssey is ready for anything a family can ask for. It is also smooth and quiet on the road while still being a bit sporty for a minivan. The Odyssey earns a sedan like fuel economy rating of 19 mpg city, 28 highway and 22 mpg combined.
- **2012 Volkswagen Passat:** The all-new Passat ditches the old Euro firm suspension in favor of a more luxurious ride while still retaining a

modicum of European athleticism in corners. The base engine is average, but the optional engines are superb, whether it's the hyper-efficient TDI turbo-diesel or the seriously strong VR6. Evidently, Volkswagen discovered that Americans like big back seats, because the Passat's is huge. A diesel powered Passat should get 31 mpg in the city / 43 on the highway and 35 mpg combined. A five-cylinder version with a manual transmission earns an EPA rating of 22 mpg city, 32 highway and 26 mpg combined.

- **2013 Lincoln MKX:** In luxury, technology and value, the MKX has most bases covered, and safety is a big part of its appeal, too. The MKX features a full complement of airbags, and it is equipped with sensors that employ the side airbags during a rollover. Electronic traction and stability control are standard, as is a radar-based rear backup warning system. The cabin is quiet and calm on the road, and the 305 horsepower V6 delivers excellent performance. The 3.7 liter engine earns an EPA estimate of 18 mpg city, 27 highway and 21 mpg in combined city and highway driving.
- **2013 Chevrolet Malibu:** You don't have to spend a ton of money to get a comfortable, attractive sedan. The new Malibu offers decent handling to the point where it's fun to drive but also has fuel sipping engine choices such as the Malibu Eco. Official numbers for the Eco place it at 25 mpg in the city and 37 mpg on the highway. The price is just right too, the fuel sipping Eco version starts at around \$26,000.
- **2012 Kia Optima:** The Optima's interior is a welcome spot for the long-legged, and the seating is both comfortable and supportive. It also has voice activated navigation that is available as an option on any Optima with an automatic transmission. Additional trip-worthy features include a rear-view camera, SiriusXM's traffic and weather updates, and an eight-speaker Infinity audio system. A Kia Optima with the 2.4 liter engine earns an EPA rating of 24 mpg city, 35 highway and 28 mpg combined. A hybrid version is available, and it does significantly better with a 35 mpg estimate in the city, 40 on the highway and 37 mpg combined.
- **2013 Dodge Dart:** With up to 41 miles per gallon and fairly spacious interior, the new Dodge Dart is great for road trips on a smaller scale. Dodge's Uconnect system comes complete with a large, 8.4 inch color touch screen that makes keeping in touch easy. We recommend the sport-themed Rallye model, which gets unique exterior styling flourishes and a leather-wrapped multifunction steering wheel.
- **2012 Jeep Grand Cherokee:** The recently revised Grand Cherokee is great on the open highway, but it can also take you places other SUVs can't: off-road. The Grand Cherokee is one of the best off-road SUVs around and is easily the best one in its price range. However, it can also be equipped with a certain degree of luxury. The Limited or Overland versions are every bit as luxurious as an Audi, BMW or Mercedes Benz. A V6 powered Grand Cherokee earns an EPA rating of 17 mpg city, 23 highway and 19 mpg in combined city and highway driving.

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